

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (cancelled)
2. (cancelled)
3. (cancelled)
4. (cancelled)

5. (original) A packaging assembly for holding a product, the assembly comprising:
at least one longitudinal support post, each support post having a top end and a bottom
end and at least one integrally formed locking tab disposed at the bottom end; and
a rectangular base having four corners and an outer perimeter and openings disposed at
the corners, the openings being configured to receive the bottom ends of the support posts in
interlocking fashion;

wherein the base and the support post cooperate to prevent the support post from moving
laterally and wherein each support post is formed from a sheet of paper wound into a tubular
structure comprising an outer wall and an inner, product-facing wall substantially coextensive
with the outer wall and joined to the outer wall at outer ends to define a hollow space
therebetween. and wherein each support post outer wall comprises two outer wall members
joined at a right angle along an outer edge, each outer wall member extends from the outer edge
to one of the outer ends, the inner wall comprises two inner wall members joined at a right angle
along an inner corner, each inner wall member extends from the inner corner to one of the outer
ends, and the outer and inner walls form the locking tabs at the outer ends, and ~~The assembly of~~
~~claim 4~~ wherein each locking tab is substantially planar and is formed from adjacent portions of

the outer wall and the inner wall.

6. (currently amended) The assembly of claim 5 comprising two locking tabs and wherein the two locking tabs are oriented on non-parallel planes.

7. (original) The packaging system of claim 6 wherein the locking tabs are spaced inwardly from the outer perimeter of the base and wherein portions of the base abut each outer wall member.

8. (original) The assembly of claim 7 further comprising a top cap wherein the support posts extend from the base to the top cap and fit within the top cap.

9. (original) The assembly of claim 8 further comprising transparent film wrapped around the support posts.

10. (original) The assembly of claim 8 further comprising a transparent film placed over the product between the product and the support posts.

11. (original) The assembly of claim 7 wherein the base is water-resistant.

12. (original) The assembly of claim 11 wherein the base is made from expanded polystyrene.

13. (cancelled)

14. (cancelled)

15. (cancelled)

16. (cancelled)

17. (cancelled)

18. (currently amended) A packaging assembly for holding a product, the assembly comprising:

at least one longitudinal support post, the support post having a top end and a bottom end

and an integrally formed locking portion disposed at the bottom end, each support post being formed from a sheet of paper wound into a tubular structure comprising an outer wall and an inner, product-facing wall substantially coextensive with the outer wall and joined to the outer wall at outer ends to define at least one hollow space therebetween, each support post outer wall comprising two outer wall members joined at a right angle along a vertical outer edge, each outer wall member extending from the vertical outer edge to one of the outer ends, the outer and inner walls forming the locking portion at one of the outer ends; and

a rectangular base having four corners and an outer perimeter and openings disposed at the corners, the openings being configured to receive the bottom ends of the support post in interlocking fashion;

wherein the base and the locking portion of the support post cooperate to prevent the support post from moving laterally, and ~~The assembly of claim 17~~ wherein the locking portion is polygonal.

19. (original) The assembly of claim 18 wherein the locking portion is spaced inwardly from the outer perimeter of the base and wherein portions of the base abut the outer wall.

20. (original) The assembly of claim 19 further comprising a top cap and wherein the support posts extend from the base to the top cap and fit within the top cap.

21. (original) The assembly of claim 20 further comprising transparent film wrapped around the support posts.

22. (original) The assembly of claim 20 further comprising a transparent film placed over the product between the product and the support posts.

23. (original) The assembly of claim 19 wherein the base is water-resistant.

24. (original) The assembly of claim 23 wherein the base is made from expanded polystyrene.
25. (cancelled)
26. (original) The assembly of claim 19 wherein the outer wall comprises an inwardly directed bead having an apex in close proximity with or adjacent the inner wall, the bead dividing the corner post into a longitudinal, tubular, hollow subsection and the locking portion.
27. (original) The assembly of claim 26 wherein the locking portion is fully enclosed.
28. (original) The assembly of claim 26 wherein the locking portion is partially enclosed.
29. (cancelled)
30. (cancelled)
31. (cancelled)